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ABSTRACT

The changing demographics in U.S. institutions have contributed to the increasingly multicultural nature of classrooms. Thus, it is imperative that teachers become cultural brokers and social engineers who have the ability to lead and empower their students. The multicultural construct is seen as a conducive rationale to prepare teachers for the diverse democratic classroom. This paper explores these issues as they pertain to the structure of curriculum and instruction in K-12 social studies classrooms. The paper outlines an alternative approach based on democratic principles and values. It provides pedagogical implications for preservice and inservice teachers to enhance their effective professional teaching roles in helping all learners to succeed. The paper lists nine guidelines that should underlie the structure of social studies curriculum and instruction, and based on those guidelines, it lists a second set of nine specific guidelines that can best govern the structure of social studies to ensure student success. (Contains 15 references.) (BT)

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TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES MULTICULTURALLY: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

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Introduction

School reformers often find democratic principles as a panacea to provide optimal learning opportunities for all students. Thus, the solution to various problems in schools has frequently been traced to classical democratic principles. Since democracy must not be delinked from any avenue of human life (Dewey, 1966), it must be integrated in all aspects of educational institutions such as schools. Once democracy is the axiom upon which learning and teaching are based, promising educational outcomes will follow.

Therefore, the process and product of social studies education should rest on democratic principles and values. Most importantly, state and national content guidelines and standards should be based on the pillars of democratic education. This includes revising the structure of social studies curriculum and instructional activities in terms of a more comprehensive pluralistic framework to ensure full participation by all learners in diverse schools. Also this involves preparing prospective teachers for the social realities that affect learning/teaching outcomes. Unless teachers in public schools play their democratic roles in bringing about desired change, we will continue to flounder about how to inculcate the same civic values in students.

Undoubtedly, effective accountability is essential for high quality professional teaching. In particular, it is "critical for teachers who wish to create and sustain democratic cultures in their classrooms" (Lieber, Mikel, & Pervil, 1994, p.232), to invoke alternative ways of content delivery and assessment in terms of the demands of the learning/teaching context along with the expectations of civic educational goals (Suleiman & Moore, 1997b).

Such demands are dictated by the changing social fabric in the American public schools. Particularly, the changing demographics in the U.S. institutions have contributed to the increasingly multicultural nature of classrooms. Thus, it is imperative that teachers become cultural brokers and social engineers who have the ability to lead and empower their students (Suleiman, 1998). The

multicultural construct is seen as a conducive rationale to prepare teachers for the diverse democratic classroom (Suleiman, 1996).

This paper explores these issues as they pertain to the structure of curriculum and instruction in social studies classrooms. It provides an alternative approach based on democratic principles and values. Pedagogical implications are also provided for pre-service and in-service teachers to enhance their effective professional teaching roles in helping all learners to succeed.

Paradigm Shifts

It is worthwhile to examine the shift over the years from traditional to democratic teaching relevant to the process and product of social studies. Elsewhere, Suleiman & Moore (1997a) reviewed several paradigms without showing any preference of one approach over the other. Instead, the comparison would allow teachers to incorporate whatever works in the context of their classrooms. While some techniques may seem appealing, others may raise some concerns. Nonetheless, all approaches are equally significant in meeting the educational needs of all students in the context at question.

Having this in mind, Lieber, Mikel, & Pervil (1994, pp. 235-238) outlined the paradigm shift in teaching and assessment that have direct implications for structuring social studies curriculum and activities to empower all students. Following is a summary of their dichotomy along with the salient traits of each paradigm:

Traditional Paradigm	*Democratic Paradigm*
inequality	equality
monologue	dialogue
coercive	invitational
dehumanizing	dignifying
external rewards	internal rewards
contrived and disconnected	authentic and purposeful
limited choices	free choices
autocratic decision making	shared decision making
voice of authority	student voice
single perspective	multiple perspectives
cultural uniformity	cultural diversity
one approach	multiple approaches
predetermined goals	emergent goals
competitive learning	collaborative problem solving
one-dimensional	multi-dimensional . . .

Given the urgent need for an open inquiry in educational input that is free from any dogmatic militancy (McKenna, Robinson, & Miller, 1990), efforts to advance the reform agenda in assessing social studies have been underway as several national agencies, such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), to set standards in terms of the democratic paradigm. The purpose was to develop a philosophical construct that would advance academic, social, linguistic as well as civic competence for curriculum developers of social studies. From this genesis evolved the formal definition of these areas in an attempt to integrate the study of the social sciences, language arts, humanities, and other content areas to promote civic and linguistic competence. Through this integration within the school program, social studies and language arts provide a systematic study of various disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, economics, linguistics, ethnography, cultural pluralism, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of such integration is to help young people develop the ability to make informed decisions for the public as good citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (NCSS, 1994, p. vii).

It must be cautioned that this approach does not imply any set of mandated outcomes or establish a national curriculum for the social studies. It does, however, suggest that an integrated social studies perspective should be one that is academically sound, multidisciplinary, and comprehensive.

For a new teacher, this can be a very gelatinous situation. One may believe that all students need to be free to construct their own knowledge. However, sole reliance on one approach at the expense of another can reinforce biases and be self-serving to the students. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the teacher constructing the one and only "truth". Somewhere in between these two extremes are where most teachers function within a classroom.

The expectations for successful incorporation of these various themes would be in instituting benchmarks or guidelines for the integration of state, local, and classroom curricular plans. It was posited that these guidelines would then have a strong influence on classroom practice, enhancing student learning, and promoting appropriate and accurate student assessment. As this growth and change are fully realized, an integrated social studies curriculum would then emerge that benefits all diverse learners in the classrooms of today as well as tomorrow.

Multiculturalism: A Democratic Framework For Social Studies Structure

Multicultural education is a concept that encompasses an array of sociological, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, psychological, philosophical, and pedagogical elements (Bennett, 1999; Suleiman, 1996; Suleiman, 1998). These components are inherent in the basic premise of multiculturalism and its promising educational consequences.

In order to provide a philosophical foundation for effective schooling, it is worthwhile to look into the definition of multicultural education within which teacher education is to be incorporated and social studies content is delivered. According to Suzuki (1984), multicultural education is defined as a multidisciplinary educational program that provides multiple learning environments matching the academic, social, and linguistic needs of all students. These needs may vary widely due to differences in race, sex, ethnicity, or sociolinguistic backgrounds of the students and educators. In addition to enhancing the development of their basic academic and social skills, the multicultural education programs should help students develop a better understanding of their own backgrounds and of other groups that compose our society. Through this process, the program need to help students learn to respect and appreciate cultural diversity, overcome ethnocentric and prejudicial attitudes, and understand the sociohistorical, economic and psychological factors that have produced the contemporary conditions of inequality, alienation and ethnic polarization. Within the overarching framework of democracy, multicultural education should also foster students' and educators' ability to analyze critically and make intelligent decisions about real-life problems and issues through a process of democratic, dialogical inquiry. Finally, multicultural education should help conceptualize a vision of a better society and acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to move the society toward greater equality of freedom, the eradication of degrading poverty and dehumanizing dependency, and the development of meaningful identity for all people.

Multicultural education also permeates the curriculum and teaching methods including the socialization and interactional processes among diverse participants in the culture of schools. Furthermore, the content and methodology of multicultural education must be founded on a democratic philosophical base that reflects a clear understanding of cultural pluralism and its sociopolitical implications in educational settings.

Providing what deficit theories cannot offer, multicultural education affirms individuals' rights and encourages active participation of diverse groups through a democratic dialogical process (Nieto,

2000). In particular, it affirms its responsibility to prepare educators in order that they may assist all children, adolescents, and adults to understand the significance of cultural heritage in their personal development and participation in democracy.

Banks (1994, 1995) suggests a four-level approach for education in diverse settings that is conducive to social studies curriculum and teaching. This multi-level conceptualization includes the social action approach, the transformation approach, the additive approach, and the contributions approach. These approaches can serve as a useful tool in promoting students' civic literacy skills in multicultural settings. First, students are encouraged to take action to solve learning through social discourse and in terms of their meaningful way of interaction that is bound by their sociocultural make-up. Second, the multiculturally transformed social studies curriculum enables learners to view social realities and build cultural linkages among all students. Furthermore, students are afforded with added universal elements of global thinking that enrich their educational opportunities in schools. Finally, students see themselves and their cultures through the contributions of their ancestors to human civilizations.

Banks's approach has also profound implications for social studies instruction and the development of various aspects of literacy such as historical literacy, geographical literacy, sociopolitical literacy, ethnic literacy, ethical literacy, and the like. These notions are usually integrated into social studies curricular activities that contain various perspectives about history, or when historical recall is needed to help solve a pressing issue. The purpose of these strands is to expose learners in the early grades to the concept of sequencing, and gives them a greater awareness concerning time and order. For example, at the middle school level, students increase their understanding of divergent views constructed by those with differing experiences, societal values, as well as cultural traditions. Also, at the high school level, students evaluate history from a more sophisticated and analytical point of view. This contributes to their present and future ability to make informed choices that not only affect them individually, but collectively in regards to society as well (National Council of the Social Studies, 1994).

In fact, the multicultural construct is a congruent framework with many state and national standards for educating students K-12. At the national level, such associations as NCSS have stressed an informative approach to presenting historical perspectives and social realities in their framework and standards. These standards capitalize on the pluralistic nature of the American society and its social diversity. For instance, a historical perspective is evident in theme one of the

NCSS framework which addresses culture and cultural diversity; theme five which addresses the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions; theme six which studies how people create and change structures of power, authority and governance; theme eight which deals with the relationships among science, technology, and society; as well as theme ten which focuses on civic ideals and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994).

Similarly, at the local and state levels, such Social Science Literacy Frameworks have become popular guidelines to teach social studies for K-12 students. For instance, the California Social Science Framework includes six literacy themes, deeply-rooted in the proposed multicultural construct. Most of these themes have direct implications for the history strand of social studies. These state-mandated guidelines involve:

1. *Historical literacy:* meaning of time and chronology: cause and effect; continuity and change; importance of religion, politics, and philosophy.
2. *Cultural literacy:* multicultural perspective that respects all people. Evaluate the complexities associated with literature, art, drama, music technology and social structure to name a few.
3. *Ethical literacy:* universal concern for human rights in all time periods and places. Examines how societies resolve ethical issues and the implications for addressing them.
4. *Geographic literacy:* knowledge of world regions and their historical, cultural, economic, and political characteristics.
5. *Sociopolitical literacy:* understanding the complex relationships between varying social and political systems, as well as society and law.
6. *Economic literacy:* evaluate and understand economic problems that confront all societies and how local systems are affected by international systems.

Implications:

Since teachers in K-12 schools are seen implementers of educational goals at the local, state, and national levels, they must operate from a general set of guidelines that embed their planning and implementing their lessons. Thus, the following guidelines should underlie the structure of social studies curriculum and instruction:

1. Integrating different experiences relevant to all minorities and other ethnic groups in the American society;

2. Understanding the nature of the pluralistic society and its implications for the social interaction process in schools;
3. Creating optimal opportunities for learning for all students;
4. Understanding students' attitudes, values, histories etc. that significantly affect civic roles and functions;
5. Acquiring global knowledge and literacy in terms of democratically sound principles;
6. Utilizing multicultural competence in terms of the unique contextual demands of learning/teaching situations;
7. Developing a socio-historical understanding of the pluralistic society;
8. Developing democratic skills and pluralistic civic values;
9. Appreciating the dynamic societal changes including technology in the global society.

Elsewhere, Suleiman & Moore (1997a) suggested the 'rubrication' of the teaching and learning of social studies K-12. Based on the above guidelines, it has been suggested that another set of specific guidelines can best govern the structure of social studies (SS) to ensure success of all students. These include:

1. Establish an inclusive SS evaluation procedures and assessment techniques.
2. Be aware of what specifically needs to be learned/taught in SS classes.
3. Model and communicate the goal and function of the SS approach to the students.
4. Skills and assessment should relate directly to stated SS district/school goals.
5. Skills and assessment should also relate to SS grade level equivalency.
6. Examine the SS textbooks/materials that meaningfully represent all learners
7. Compare stated SS objectives to the school's, state's standards or national standards.
8. Adapt the prescribed SS standards to the learning/teaching context.
9. Derive instruction from assessment and vice versa when teaching SS.

Conclusion:

This paper has provided a general framework for the social studies process and product K-12 based on prescribed guidelines and standards. A democratic rationale has been proposed in terms of the American social realities; it is based on the comprehensive global approach of multiculturalism. Finally, pedagogical implications have been suggested to provide optimal learning opportunities for all students through effective pluralistic teaching practices in the 21st century democratic classrooms.

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